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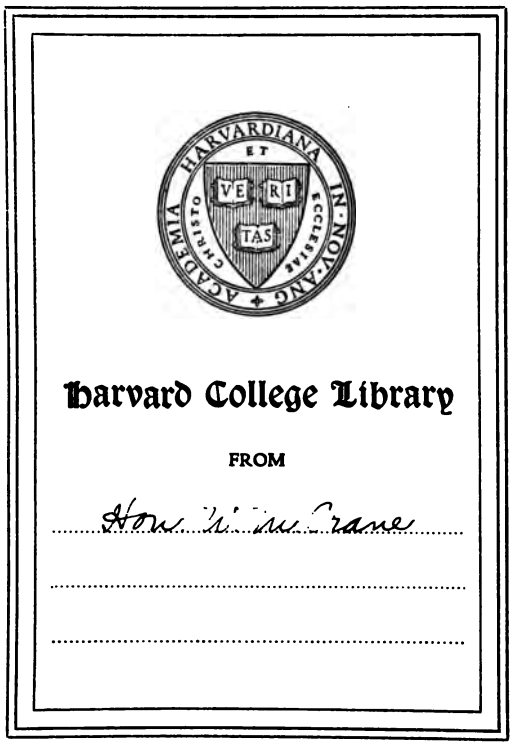

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FROM

Hon. William Crane

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Hon. W. M. Crane,
Washington.

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT AT THE CITY OF WASHINGTON.

CLOSING ADDRESS

BY

HON. GEORGE F. HOAR,

United States Senator from Massachusetts,

IN THE

HALL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

DECEMBER 12, 1900,

THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BEING IN JOINT CONVENTION.

WASHINGTON.
1900.

~~LS 18014.10~~

LS 18051.11

CLOSING ADDRESS
BY
HON. GEORGE F. HOAR.

The Senate and House of Representatives being in joint convention to hold commemorative exercises in honor of the centennial anniversary of the first session of Congress in the permanent capital of our country—

Mr. HOAR said:

Mr. PRESIDENT: It is a hundred years since this city, planned by George Washington, became the seat of government. The site was chosen by the First Congress, in accord with the design of the framers of the Constitution. And yet we seem to-day to be still engaged in laying its foundations. The other great capitals of the world—Rome, London, Paris, Berlin, Edinburgh, Vienna—have their origin in a remote past. They not only embody the earliest authentic history of their countries, but their beginning is lost in the darkness of antiquity or hidden in the mist of fable. Their early annals have perished in a deeper oblivion than that which covers the builders of the pyramids, which moved Sir Thomas Browne to his sublimest utterance: "History sinketh beneath her cloud. The traveler, as he paceth amazedly through these deserts, asketh of her, Who builded them? and she mumbleth something, but what it is he heareth not."

But Washington is still in earliest youth. There are Americans living who were born before this city received its name. For the first fifty years and more, down to the end of the civil war, our frugal predecessors hardly expended enough to make it decently habitable. They expended nothing for its adornment, except the construction of this Capitol, which was not finished in its present condition until 1865. But, taking the century as a whole, certainly the American people have no reason to be ashamed of their city.

It was on the border line between the two contending parties in the civil war. The fires of that mighty conflict burned here more

fiercely and hotly than anywhere else. When peace came Washington, like the whole country, felt the inspiration of the new era.

> Before, she like some shepherdess did show,
> Who sat to bathe her by a river's side;
> Not answering to her fame, but rude and low,
> Nor taught the beauteous arts of modern pride.
>
> Now, like a maiden queen, she will behold,
> From her high turrets, hourly suitors come;
> The east with incense, and the west with gold,
> Will stand, like suppliants, to receive her doom.

I have spoken of the antiquity of European capitals. London has been a center of civilization for more than twelve hundred years. The House of Commons has existed for eight hundred. There has been a Bishop's Palace at Fulham more than a thousand. Paris has been a seat of government for thirteen centuries; Berlin for nearly four; Vienna for seven. And yet there are few places that can show for any one century more than three products of architecture that equal the Capitol, the Washington Monument, and the Congressional Library. If we can add to the glories of Washington three such structures only for each coming century, we need not be ashamed of comparison with any foreign city when Washington shall have reached the same age. Yet in 1800 we were a people of but 5,000,000. We are now 77,000,000. The population of this District is multiplied in larger proportion still. We shall deal with our metropolis in the coming centuries, as compared with that which has gone, with a liberality proportioned to our wealth, numbers, and power. If God spare the Republic, what may we not hope for Washington?

These three structures, unrivaled, as they are, each in its respective class, are more interesting still for what they typify and stand for. The monument to the Father of the Country is but a simple shaft. It marks a narrow spot. It commemorates a single human character. But the spot it marks, as was said, Mr. Speaker, by one of the most accomplished men who ever sat in your chair, "is a prime meridian." The prime meridian of universal longitude on sea or land may be at Greenwich or at Paris or where you will. But the prime meridian of pure, exalted, human character will be marked forever by yonder obelisk. Integrity and patriotism are to be measured by nearness to it or departure from it. Boastfulness, out of place everywhere, is a

thousand times out of place when we speak of the modest and unselfish Washington. Yet we can establish by the concurrent authority of the foremost men of all civilized countries that what the old monk, Joseph of Exeter, said of the English Alfred is true of him: "The Old World knows not his peer, nor will the future show us his equal; he alone towers over other kings, better than the past ones, and greater than those that are to be."

That integrity, that unambitious service, that unerring wisdom, that unwearied industry, that unhesitating self-sacrifice, that purity not only unsullied but untempted—not even the temptation to sin seems to have beset that lofty nature—were all his. The devil is an ass. But he never was such an ass as to waste his time tempting George Washington. [Applause.]

There is no time to-day to cite the overwhelming and concurrent testimony of great Englishmen, statesmen, and writers of history, and of great authorities on the Continent, to the primacy of George Washington among mankind. The only name likely to be thought of anywhere for parallel or comparison is that in whose glory we also have an inherited title to share—that of Alfred, the thousandth anniversary of whose death is about to be celebrated by the people on whose throne his descendant now sits.

This whole city is, in a larger sense, a Washington monument. It were better that that great name pass into oblivion and be forgotten unless the walls of this building where we are assembled, dedicated to legislation and to justice, also bear honorable witness to the character and influence of him who laid its corner stone. Here for a hundred years a free people have enacted a great history, with its great achievements and its greater self-restraints. Here have been enacted the laws under which thirteen States have become forty-five States, and the country, which at first covered a little space by the side of the Atlantic, has spread until it covers a continent and its portals are upon both the seas. Here has been witnessed the sublimest spectacle that can exist on earth—a great and free people governing itself by a law higher than its own desire. A country where every man has his equal voice must, in its legislation, sometimes exhibit the infirmity common to humanity. But, in the main, faith and honor and duty have triumphed in these halls over selfishness and passion and ambition. Here the

interests of capital have been protected by the votes of labor. Here debtors have fixed in good faith the value of their payments to their creditors. Here a people under no constraint but their own sense of duty, determined, in spite of fearful temptation, to continue to bear the weight of a vast debt. Here the policy of dealing with the conquered was decided at the end of a long war by the votes of the conquerors, among whom every other family was in mourning for its dead; and not a drop of blood was shed and not a punishment exacted. Here finance and currency, with their subtleties surpassing the subtleties of metaphysics, have been dealt with by the plain sense of plain men. Here great public ways connecting distant oceans have been provided for. Here the manufacturing independence of America has been achieved. Here the great measures have been framed and enacted under which millions of men have been raised from slavery to citizenship and millions more welcomed from foreign lands. Here a disputed title to executive power has been peacefully settled under circumstances that would have drenched any other land with blood. And all this has been accomplished under the restraints of a written Constitution.

Here, also, in yonder silent chamber have been pronounced the judgments under which the powers of nation and State have been kept each in its appointed path, as the planets are kept in their courses, without noise and without jar.

This has been the record of a single century. It has been the record of the achievement of earliest youth. The men who have wrought this history knew well what they were doing. There has been no drifting into empire. They have but seen what they foresaw. The man who is to write this story, as Bancroft might have written it, as Macaulay might have written it, as he who gave us the best portraiture of Washington in literature before Massachusetts called him to another service—called him from writing history to making it—might have written it, has not yet begun his task. But it will yet be written. It will be written to be read of all men, as the one best story, so far, of Constitutional Liberty, protected and vindicated by law, according to the will of a free people.

Literature and art and science came later. They always come

later. Art has provided for literature in yonder library its noble and fitting home. American science, also, has here its noble and fitting home—the Smithsonian Institution, founded, as we delight to remember, by the generosity of an Englishman, a subject of that gracious sovereign from whose realm we have learned so much of law and science and literature and liberty, to whom we are glad to send our salutation on this our Centennial Day. While we remember with gratitude this great benefaction of our English kinsman, we are happy to recall also that it has been at least in some degree recompensed by the bounty to the city of London of George Peabody, an American, a citizen of the North by birth, a Southern man by adoption, an admirable example of the best traits of both sections blended into the highest character and type of American citizenship. Here, also, universities destined to take a high rank among the great institutions of the world have already laid their foundations and are raising their towers to the sky.

The men who wrought this great work are gone—most of them—John Adams and his illustrious son, Jefferson and Madison and Jackson and Lincoln and Grant and Webster and Clay and Calhoun and Seward and Benton and Sumner and Wilson and Morton and Chandler and Stevens and Fessenden and Justin Morrill and Lamar and Harris and Bayard and Beck and Walthall—I have begun a catalogue I can not complete. But no list of the illustrious statesmen of the Republic or of the illustrious benefactors of this metropolis in the last century must omit the name of him whom the fatal arrow smote, in the hour which seemed alike the end and the beginning of a great career—your predecessor and friend, Mr. President, James A. Garfield. A few of their companions and coadjutors survive to behold the dawn of the new century and give their counsel to the people who are to carry on its work, as a few of the companions of Washington beheld the beginning of this, and inaugurated its great accomplishment on the principles of the Revolution. Their work also is about done. They seem to survive for a brief period only that the new century may clasp hands with the old, and that they may bring to the future the benediction of the past. [Loud applause.]

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